

614  
L931i

NATIONAL BOARD OF HEALTH  
AND MEDICAL ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE, NEW YORK.

# INVESTIGATION AND REFUTATION

OF CERTAIN

STATEMENTS AND CHARGES

MADE TO HIS EXCELLENCY, THE PRESIDENT, AND TO  
THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTA-  
TIVES OF THE UNITED STATES OF  
AMERICA, BY THE

## NATIONAL BOARD OF HEALTH

IN ITS

### ANNUAL REPORT

*For the year 1882.*

---

NEW ORLEANS:

J. S. RIVERS, STEAM-POWER PRINTER, 74 CAMP ST.  
1883.

LIBRARY  
OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS



614  
L931i

1959P-29 MAS

INVESTIGATION AND REFUTATION OF CERTAIN STATEMENTS AND CHARGES MADE TO HIS EXCELLENCY, THE PRESIDENT, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, BY THE NATIONAL BOARD OF HEALTH, IN ITS ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1882.

BOARD OF HEALTH, STATE OF LOUISIANA, }  
New Orleans, December 15, 1882. }

*To the Honorable the President and Members of the Board of Health of the State of Louisiana:*

GENTLEMEN—In accordance with the suggestion of our President, your honorable body referred the Annual Report of the National Board of Health, to the Finance and Conference Committees for examination and report.

In obedience to the wishes of the Board of Health, formally expressed at the regular meeting, December 14, 1882, your Finance and Conference Committees have the honor to submit the following, relating more especially to those portions of the Annual Report of the National Board of Health for 1882, which appertains, to or reflects upon the Board of Health of the State of Louisiana.

FIRST—The Annual Report of the National Board of Health is not national in its character, but is in reality personal and partisan in, that it is an elaborate attempt to defend illegal and unconstitutional acts, and at the same time breathes a spirit of unjust hostility against the Board of Health of the State of Louisiana.

On page 19, Annual Report of the National Board of Health for 1882, we find the following :

"The Board of Health of the State of Louisiana has persistently refused to send infected vessels bound for New Orleans to Ship Island. The health authorities of the Mississippi Valley States have, with equal persistence, demanded in the interests of the public health of the valley, that no infected vessels should be allowed to pass Eadsport northwise,

P 59621

"This demand was regarded by this Board as being reasonable. The fears entertained as to the probability of the introduction of yellow fever into the country in the neighborhood of the Mississippi Quarantine from infected vessels, detained there for treatment, are believed to be warranted by past and recent experience. Entertaining this opinion the Board directed its presiding officer to address a communication to the Governor of Louisiana, calling his attention to the importance of this measure of prevention, and respectfully advising him to use his influence to secure the needful legislation in furtherance of the end so earnestly desired by the States of the Mississippi Valley. This request of the Board made in behalf of the health authorities of cities and States on the Mississippi river, was communicated by his Excellency, Governor McEnery, to the Legislature of Louisiana, but it does not appear that any action was taken thereon."

The National Board furnishes no facts to substantiate its fears as to the probability of the introduction of the yellow fever into the country in the neighborhood of the Mississippi Quarantine Station, beyond the attempts of its members, agents and employees in the fall of 1880, to manufacture yellow fever out of the malarial fevers of Plaquemine parish.

The erroneous character of the assertions of the resident member of the National Board of Health, with reference to the Plaquemine rice fever of 1880, has been fully exposed by the President of this Board in the Annual Report of 1880, pp. 11, 66, 149.

The folly of the Ship Island scheme was in like manner exposed by the President and members of the Board of Health, in the Annual Report of 1880, pp. 47, 63, and Annual Report, 1881, pp. 382, 393, from which we quote the following:

"The commerce of New Orleans depends upon the deep water secured by Capt. Eads, and ships come to us from the ports of Europe, to receive the cotton, corn, wheat, and sugar and cattle of the Mississippi Valley, because after entering the passes they are in the safe harbor of the great inland sea, and can run up to the wharves of New Orleans, and receive their cargoes in the shortest possible time. The foreign nations supporting the com-

merce of the Mississippi Valley, England, France, Holland, Spain, Norway, Sweden and Denmark, all have their islands and ports in the West Indies, and their ships are compelled to communicate with the representatives of their governments in Cuba, Jamaica, Barbadoes, St. Thomas and other west indian islands.

"According to the Havana yellow fever commission, and the National Board of Health, the yellow fever prevails annually, and is indigenous in the Antilles, hence all ships communicating with those ports must be regarded as coming from infected ports. In like manner, all European ships touching or communicating with Central and South American ports, within certain latitudes, must be regarded as coming from infected ports, and in like manner subject to the restrictions of the Ship Island Quarantine.

"Had the propositions of the National Board of Health, with reference to the Ship Island Quarantine, been accepted by the Board of Health of the State of Louisiana, the commerce of New Orleans would have been destroyed, *whilst the city would not have been protected, as the Ship Island Quarantine was scarcely capable of protecting the Coast of Mississippi.*

"The Board of Health of the State of Louisiana has protected the commerce of the Mississippi Valley, and at the same time has excluded foreign pestilence, by confining itself to the exercise of the powers conferred upon it by the State and Federal Governments; by respecting the rights of commerce; and the health of sister states; and by the rejection of the preposterous schemes of the National Board of Health.

"Another fact of great moment in the consideration of the Ship Island Quarantine of the National Board of Health is, that the experience of the past three years, 1880, 1881, 1882, has been, that it affords an imperfect protection, even to the Coast of Mississippi."

The port of entry for the State of Mississippi is located at Shieldsboro, where the Collector of Customs resides. "Vessels have no difficulty in flanking the Ship Island Quarantine by running through Cat Island Pass, which is some twenty miles wide, and reporting at Shieldsboro, Bay St. Louis and Pass Christian,

where they are boarded by the Customhouse and Quarantine Officers, who reside in those thickly populated summer resorts"—Report of President Jones, 1880, pp. 61, 65.

The utter inutility of the Ship Island Quarantine, as well as the wisdom and justice of the action of the Board of Health of the State of Louisiana, received a full and incontrovertible demonstration in the present year, 1882.

The Board of Health of the State of Louisiana, have all the facts relating to the circumstances in point, that of the Russian Bark Iris, but your committee prefer to give the account in the language of the Annual Report of the National Board of Health for 1882.

Dr. Jas. L. Cabell, President of the National Board of Health, and Chas. Smart, Major and Surgeon, U. S. A., Secretary National Board of Health, thus solemnly record their testimony as to the inefficiency of the Ship Island Quarantine:

"During the service at Ship Island Station, a case occurred where yellow fever reappeared in a vessel which had been fever free for fifteen days, and fumigated in the interval. The Russian bark Iris arrived from Pensacola, Fla., on June 30. One of the crew died of yellow fever on the previous day. None of the others, fourteen in number, were sick, although the captain was the only one who had the protection given by a previous attack.

"On July 5th, a sailor from the vessel was taken to hospital with yellow fever. He recovered; and on the 15th was returned to his ship, which was fumigated, and as no other cases had developed in the meantime, the vessel was discharged from Ship Island, to report to the Quarantine physician, at Pensacola Station, where she arrived the 18th, on which day one man was taken sick and two or three others thereafter, in rapid succession.

"The vessel returned to Ship Island, where, with one exception, all the others liable to the disease became affected.

"It has been suggested that the Iris was the means by which the yellow fever was introduced into Pensacola." Annual Report N. B. H., p. 19.

Here then, according to the official statement of the National Board of Health, a vessel was sent from Pensacola to Ship Island, where she arrived with yellow fever on the 30th June. On the 5th, a case of yellow fever, was transferred from the Iris to the Ship Island Quarantine; he recovered, and was returned to the vessel, which on the 15th, was after *fumigation*, allowed to return to Pensacola.

What kind of fumigation was practised is not stated, but a vessel thoroughly infected with yellow fever, was sent from the Ship Island Quarantine to Pensacola, after *only ten days' detention*.

The vessel arrived at Pensacola on the 18th of July, on which day one man *was taken sick and two or three others thereafter in rapid succession*.

*"The vessel returned to Ship Island where, with one exception, all others liable to the disease became affected."*

Could there have been in the whole history of Medicine and Quarantine a more thorough and practical demonstration, of the utter absurdity and utter imbecility of the Ship Island Quarantine, notwithstanding boastings of the National Board of Health?

Did not the scheme of the National Board of Health to concentrate the infected vessels from the entire Gulf Coast, at a poorly equipped quarantine station, with only two board houses and no proper facilities for disinfection, originate either directly, or indirectly, the yellow fever of 1882, in Pensacola?

Let the Congress of the United States appoint a commission of honest, intelligent, unprejudiced citizens to determine the momentous question.

In the face of such facts, the National Board of Health, still has the *effrontery* to urge the Ship Island farce upon the Representatives of the American people.

In palpable violation of the acts of Congress, creating the National Board of Health, its officers, employees and agents, had the impertinence to dictate to the Sovereign State of Louisiana, the course which her Governor and Representatives should pursue as to her Board of Health, and as to the conduct of her health and quarantine matters.

The Governor of Louisiana, and the General Assembly of Louisiana, were coolly asked by the National Board of Health to disregard and dishonor the solemn deliberations of her legally constituted Board of Health.

President Cabell and Secretary Smart, say :

" This request of the Board was communicated by his Excellency, Governor McEnery, to the Legislature of Louisiana, but it does not appear that any action was taken thereon. The correspondence with his Excellency, will be found in appendix marked G. }

Your committee has not been informed, neither has the President or members of the Board been informed, as to the nature of the correspondence with his Excellency, as appendix G does not appear in our copy of the Annual Report of the National Board of Health for 1882, but we extract the following from the Official Journal of the General Assembly of Louisiana, for the year 1882:

SENATE CHAMBER, }  
Baton Rouge, May 10, 1882. }

Mr. Buffington, by unanimous consent, submitted the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted :

" *Resolved*, That the Governor be requested to furnish the Senate with any information he may have in regard to the misunderstanding between the National and State Boards of Health."

SENATE CHAMBER, }  
Baton Rouge, May 15, 1882. }

The President pro tem., submitted the following communication from his Excellency the Governor :

" EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT, STATE OF LA., }  
Baton Rouge, May 12, 1882. }

" *Gentlemen of the Senate*—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your resolution requesting information as to the misunderstanding between the State and National Boards of Health. I have no such information, and trust that the fact does not exist.

" The State Board of Health of Louisiana has rigidly followed the laws of the State prescribing its duties, and while it has afforded opportunities to the National Board for inspection and observation, it has been careful not to surrender to another jurisdiction the police powers vested in it by the laws of the State. I respectfully refer the Senate to the Reports of the Board of Health now in possession of the Senate, and herewith transmit

a copy of a letter addressed by this executive to Dr. Chaillé of the National Board.

Respectfully submitted,

S. D. McENERY, *Governor.*"

"EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT, STATE OF LOUISIANA,  
Baton Rouge, May 12, 1882. }

"*Dr. Stanford E. Chaillé, Supervising Inspector National Board of Health, New Orleans, Louisiana:*

"DEAR SIR—I have received your letter of April 4th, enquiring whether the privilege of stationing an Inspector of the National Board of Health at your Quarantine Station will be continued. I would respectfully state, that the permission as given by Governor Wiltz, for the location of an inspector of the National Board, at Quarantine Station, has not been revoked.

"It is expected that the Inspector residing there, shall subject himself to the regulations of the State Board of Health. In accordance with the intention of the Acts of Congress, the National Board is to assist the State Board, and there is no necessity for a conflict of authority.

"The resident physician of the National Board is, therefore, expected to aid and assist the quarantine physician, of the State Board of Health, and it is not the intention in continuing this order of the late Governor, that he shall supervise, control, or direct the actions of the quarantine physician, or in any way interfere with the duties imposed upon him by the laws of Louisiana.

Very respectfully yours,

S. D. McENERY, *Governor.*"

It will be observed that Gov. Samuel D. McEnery informed the General Assembly of Louisiana, that

*"The State Board of Health of Louisiana has rigidly followed the laws of the State, prescribing its duties; and while it has afforded opportunities to the National Board for inspection and observation, it has been careful not to surrender to another jurisdiction the police powers vested in it by the laws of the State."*

The opinion had evidently been created upon the minds of Dr. Buffington and other members of the General Assembly of Louisiana, that a "*misunderstanding*" existed between the National and State Boards of Health, by communications addressed to, his Excellency, Governor S. D. McEnery, by Stanford E. Chaillé, M.

D., supervising inspector National Board of Health, entitled : "National Board of Health defended, dated New Orleans, April 14, 1882," and by John H. Rauch, the Secretary of the Illinois State Board of Health, relating to small-pox and river inspection service.

The avowed object of S. E. Chaillé, M. D., was to defend the National Board of Health, his real object as revealed by a critical examination of his shallow prosy epistle with its familiar sentences, was to defend himself from certain charges and at the same time to poison the minds of the General Assembly against the members, and especially the President of the State Board of Health.

Thus, in complaining to his Excellency that the National Board of Health had been severely criticised by the State Board of Health in their annual report for 1881, this agent of the National Board of Health says :

"On pages 403-4-5-7, etc., the service which I have the honor to control, is denounced in such terms as that 'its functions have been degraded into those of a detective service,' that it is an inquisitorial system of espionage and detection, etc.; further, members of the State Board have not hesitated to speak of the officers of said service as 'spies and detectives.' "

That the service of the National Board of Health had been debased by the representatives of the National Board of Health in New Orleans, into an "inquisitorial service of espionage and detection," was conclusively demonstrated by S. E. Chaillé, M. D., in his complaint to the General Assembly of Louisiana, and also in his instructions to Dr. G. F. Patton, inspector of the National Board of Health, quartered upon the Mississippi Quarantine Station, through the courtesy of Governor Louis A. Wiltz.

Thus S. E. Chaillé, M. D., supervising inspector of the National Board of Health, instructs its agent at the Mississippi Quarantine Station :

*"5. All possible vigilance must be exercised in obtaining information regarding the entire management of the quarantine station at which you are stationed. The proper and faithful discharge of the duties of their offices by the officers in charge must be carefully re-*

*ported, also every instance of neglect or maladministration, which is likely to afford danger of communicating disease."*

Nothing could more clearly show the inquisitorial and detective nature of the *enquiries* and so-called investigations, conducted by the agents of the National Board of Health, with reference to sanitary and quarantine matters, which have been confided solely to the legally constituted health authorities by the organic acts of the Legislature.

The Board of Health of the State of Louisiana, upon the urgent request of the National Board of Health, and strictly for the purpose of furnishing information as to the existence or non-existence of yellow fever, to the cities of Vicksburg and Memphis, and to certain health organizations and associations in Mississippi, Tennessee, Michigan and Illinois, permitted the supervising inspector, with his agents, to have free access to the mortuary records and to the meetings of the Board of Health, *but upon no occasion has this Board solicited or invited the advice, criticism or animadversions or the surveillance or delicate inquisitorial services of the National Board of Health, concerning duties which have been intelligently, faithfully and satisfactorily performed during the past three years.*

S. E. Chaillé, M. D., Supervising Inspector of the National Board of Health, shows his inaccurate and unsuccessful mode of reasoning, as well as his malignant turn of mind in quoting newspaper reports as to the views of the President of the State Board of Health, with reference to his views as to a National Quarantine, delivered before the Yellow Fever Congressional Committee, on January 3, 1879.

The accounts published from the *Times*, *Picayune* and *Democrat* are each essentially different, but the statement contained in the two former agree in, that the President qualified his remarks by including the expression *honestly conducted*, as applying to any system of National Quarantine and there could be no application of such views to the system of detection and espionage inaugurated and conducted by the National Board and its agents,

and more especially by S. E. Chaillé, M. D., Supervising Inspector.

If S. E. Chaillé, M. D., Supervising Inspector, National Board of Health, had been really in search of the truth, and had truly desired to present scientific facts for the consideration of his Excellency, and of the members of the General Assembly, he would instead of ransacking the files of the daily unofficial newspaper for statements from the city reports, gone to the true source of knowledge, the manuscript reports of the so-called Yellow Fever Commission on file in the government archives at Washington.

The impertinence of the communication of Dr. S. E. Chaillé to his Excellency and to the General Assembly, was scarcely equalled by that of John H. Rauch, M. D., formerly the surgeon of a negro regiment under Gen. Butler, in New Orleans, during the civil war, and at the date of his letter to Governor S. D. McEnery, Secretary of the Illinois Board of Health and an employee of the National Board of Health.

Dr. John H. Rauch, thus attempts in behalf of the National Board of Health to ignore the legally constituted health authorities of Louisiana and to instruct and threaten the Chief Executive of Louisiana as to his duties.

"Official information being this day received, to the effect, that owing to the attitude of the Louisiana State Board of Health, the inspection service appended in the foregoing resolutions has not yet been re-established, and cannot be so long as that attitude is maintained, it becomes my duty, in behalf of the Illinois State Board of Health, the Chief Quarantine authority in this State, to notify your Excellency, in your capacity, as the chief quarantine authority, of the State of Louisiana, that in the event of yellow fever being reported officially, or otherwise, in the City of New Orleans, or State of Louisiana, it will be imperative on the State Board of Health of Illinois, to declare and enforce rigid quarantine against commercial and personal intercourse with said city and State."

It is not necessary to expose further, the insolent misrepresentations and falsifications of this Illinois doctor, for if he truth-

fully represents the sentiments of the people of his great State, dwelling in a climate, foreign to the origin and spread of yellow fever, at a distance more than 1100 miles from New Orleans, they are evidently the victims of the abject fear excited by the paid agent of the National Board of Health.

SECOND—Your committee submit the following statement of Jas. S. Cabell, President of the National Board of Health in the Annual Report of the National Board, for 1882, p. 26.

“ Nevertheless, the Louisiana Board of Health, after joining in the request for the establishment and continuance of this service by formal resolutions officially transmitted to the officers of this Board, has never lost an opportunity to find fault with, and heap abuse upon both their distinguished fellow-citizens, the supervising inspector of the service in question, and all the officers of the Board for the discharge of their duties in this connection. In proof of this charge, attention is invited to the unvarnished narration of facts contained in the report of Dr. S. E. Chaillé, which is appended hereto, marked M.”

Your committee have not been favored with the “*unvarnished narrative*” of the distinguished fellow-citizen of the National Board of Health, but we are prepared to show the falsity of the preceding statements, and will now establish by indubitable facts, *that the National Board of Health, has been engaged in a systematic effort to undermine and destroy the influence of the Board of Health of the State of Louisiana.*

And in furtherance of their unworthy end, which was clearly at variance with the letter and spirit of the act establishing the National Board of Health, have used as auxilliary the New Orleans Sanitary Association, the *Times-Democrat*, and the *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal*, this last periodical being edited by S. M. Bemiss, M. D., resident member of the National Board of Health.

*Some facts illustrating the actions of the National Board of Health in Louisiana, and the inquisitorial and detective nature of its service, and its conspiracy to undermine and destroy the influence of the State Board of Health, in order that it might magnify its own importance and foist itself upon the notice of Congress for the purpose of obtaining money to sustain its assumptions.*

It is not our intention to enter into any account of the differences which arose between the National Board of Health and the State Board in 1879, in which Dr. Bell, editor of the Sanitarian, and Dr. Rauch, agent of the National Board of Health, figure conspicuously in their underhanded attacks upon the Louisiana Board. See Annual Report of National Board of Health 1879, pp. 458-463-467. It is well known, however, that the relations were not of the most amicable character, and it was thought by many that New Orleans would form the objective point of operations in 1880.

The Vice-President of the National Board of Health, opens the campaign of 1880, by attacking the veracity and honesty of the physicians AND MERCHANTS OF NEW ORLEANS.

Surgeon J. S. Billings, M. D., of the United States Army and Vice-President of the National Board of Health, in his article on yellow fever, published in the *International Review*, January, 1880, pages 29-49, thus asperses and defames the reputation of the physicians and merchants of New Orleans.

“The fact is the difficulty of obtaining information as to the existence of the earlier cases, in time to prevent communication with or from them. It is to the interest of every wealthy business man to prevent the announcement of such cases. \* \* \* This is by no means generally understood, and New Orleans in particular has, prior to last summer, pursued what we consider to be a mistaken policy in this respect. Just as our ports establish quarantine during the summer months, against all vessels coming from West Indian ports, regardless of the bills of health they may have, on the ground that no reliable information can be obtained as to the freedom of those ports from yellow fever, so a tendency to a similar action against New Orleans, is being developed on the part of interior towns, and for the same reason.” \* \* \*

"But no amount of assurance to this effect given by citizens, physicians, or sanitarians of New Orleans, will at present or for some time to come, give complete confidence to the interior towns. *The policy of concealment has been pursued so long and so uniformly, and its results have several times in the past proved so disastrous, that we can scarcely blame Pensacola or Galveston, Vicksburg or Memphis, for quarantining against New Orleans during the summer months.*"

"*There is only one remedy for this, and that is to secure the fullest publicity, and to do this through persons whose competence and disinterestedness will not be doubted.*"

This gives the basis of the action of the National Board of Health from that time to the present. Having charged the business men of New Orleans as being neither competent nor honest, and as uniformly pursuing the policy of concealment, the National Board of Health instituted a system of river and railroad quarantine inspection, surveillance and detection against New Orleans.

Regardless of the fact that during 1880, 1881 and 1882, New Orleans has been free from yellow fever, and has the lowest death rate in its entire history, and has rivalled the healthiest cities of Europe and America; in the face of such facts, the National Board of Health has squandered large sums of money upon its so-called system of inspection.

It has gone further, and through its agent or executive officer, in New Orleans, Prof. Stanford E. Chaillé, with the advice and consent of the resident member, S. M. Bemiss, M. D., levied contributions upon the railroads terminating in New Orleans.

This matter of the collection of funds by members and agents of the National Board of Health to sustain a system hostile to the local Board of Health in Louisiana, should be thoroughly investigated by the Attorney General of the United States and by the officers of the Treasury Department.

This inspection service has been and is at the present moment being conducted upon the *insolent* assertion that the resident member of the National Board of Health, S. M. Bemiss, and the supervising inspector, S. E. Chaillé, are alone trustworthy in their statements, and that all surrounding States will quarantine against New Orleans, but for their actions and labors.

The whole thing would be a contemptible farce in which Texas, Alabama, Kentucky and Missouri have never been engaged, but which has been conducted solely by Mississippi and Tennessee, (Memphis and Vicksburg and Jackson) were it not for the persistent efforts to undermine and destroy the State Board of Health of Louisiana.

Such conduct is unworthy of officers and employees of the United States Government, and Congress in creating the National Board of Health, never intended that its acts in behalf of sanitary service, should be prostituted to such base ends.

*Persistent vilification of the Board of Health of the State of Louisiana by S. M. Bemiss, M. D., resident member, and Stanford E. Chaillé, M. D., Supervising Inspector, National Board of Health.*

In proof of this proposition, see New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal, November, 1880, vol. VIII, No. 6, editorial letter by S. M. Bemiss, M. D., resident member National Board of Health, pp. 476, 482. The President of the State Board of Health and the entire Board is vilified in this article and the absurd claims is made "that the National Board of Health had protected New Orleans in the enjoyment of a lucrative trade during the entire summer."

On the contrary, the National Board of Health and its agents did all in their power to induce Memphis and Vicksburg to place quarantine against New Orleans. See New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal, editorial by S. M. Bemiss, M. D., member National Board of Health, vol. VIII, No. 4, October, 1880, pp. 382, 398. Reports of Doctors Davidson and Bruns, and Dr. Geo. M. Sternberg, U. S. N., pp. 386, 398.

The preceding articles were published (both editorials of Bemiss) in the *Times-Democrat*.

Whilst these matters were going on, the plot was working in Washington as shown by the following correspondence:

[From the Daily Picayune, Friday Morning, July 14, 1882.]

### THE SHOTGUN QUARANTINE AND SOME EXPOSURES CORRECTED.

Memphis has taken the lead in following the dictates of the defunct National Board of Health in establishing a mock quarantine against New Orleans. Mitchell's salary is stopped (the National Board of Health representative there), and we suppose that the town ought to get excited over it and check the flow of commerce. In another column we publish some very refreshing matter concerning the movements of the National Board, and Dr. Mitchell figures in a way that needs explanation.

So far as Memphis is concerned, we had begun to think, that she considered herself cleansed and purified, and would never more be afraid of the visitation of disease. The *Picayune* has noticed, however, the mortality rate there on several occasions, and showed that there was some local cause for the awful visitations that have smitten her people, and prostrated her commerce. But there seems to be a strange hallucination among her people, kept alive to a large extent, no doubt, by the energetic representative of the National Board there, that New Orleans is the source of all infection.

And so Memphis, in her great weakness, has put on a quarantine against New Orleans, to keep up Dr. Mitchell's salary of \$150 per month. The *Picayune*'s advice to the Louisiana State Board is, in view of the fact, that Memphis has been visited so much more frequently of late by yellow fever epidemics than New Orleans, to reciprocate by a quarantine against Memphis. Let no steamboat from the West that has touched at Memphis, land at New Orleans, without twenty days' quarantine above Carrollton. Let no car that has been into Memphis come to New Orleans under any circumstances, and let no passenger from Memphis come in our city until ten days' detention in quarantine. This sort of quarantine can work both ways, and probably worst against the city that had the last epidemic. We can use the two-edged sword.

We rely upon our State Board of Health to deal with these questions in a brave and consistent manner, and we feel assured that they will put down this little bit of opposition and malignity fed by the employees of the National Board of Health, whose salaries are about to be cut off.

The *Picayune* has opposed the National Board of Health, because it well knew it was a sham, and its false organization only tended to build up and strengthen the differences among communities naturally allied, and nourish suspicions that ought not to exist. The correspondence we publish elsewhere is a specimen of the proofs of what we have at hand to show the undertone of the workings of the National Board.

But Memphis looks to the Atlantic seaboard. The *New York Herald*, of July 2, reports in that city :

Cases of contagious diseases were reported last week as follows: Typhus fever 4, typhoid fever 4, scarlet fever 61, cerebro-spinal meningitis 3, measles 67, diphtheria 47, small-pox 4.

Let our readers peruse the correspondence of the N. B. H. magnates elsewhere and reflect.

### THE NATIONAL BOARD OF HEALTH.

---

SOME REVELATIONS AS TO THEIR WORKING—A CORRESPONDENCE WHICH SHOWS UP SOME OF ITS MACHINATIONS—A PLOT TO WORK UP YELLOW FEVER CASES IN 1880—HOW THE RICE FEVER WAS MADE YELLOW.

It will be remembered that in the year 1880, very strenuous efforts were made by the National Board of Health to scare up some cases of yellow fever

and make a sensation throughout the valley. The germ hunter, Dr. Sternberg, who, by the way, did not continue long in service, hunted up some cases of rice fever below the city and came rushing back with the information that he had found an epidemic of yellow fever just below New Orleans.

The National Board of Health agreed to send down to investigate the matter a delegation of doctors, representing both State and National Boards. The report of that commission was against Sternberg and against the National Board.

But this did not satisfy the National representatives, and there was some private correspondence which we have at our command.

Below we give some specimens of Turner and Mitchell's private work against the interests of New Orleans. The opening letter of the former may be keyed by saying that Turner had predicted an epidemic in 1880, and the *States* had pronounced him a charlatan, or something to that effect. We do not know what transpired on the alleged interview for which thanks are returned, but Turner's letter is at last in print, which he so much feared, and it is very rich reading. The plotting will open the eyes of some who have been swearing by the National Board.

As all well know the *Picayune* does not make charges without proof of its assertion, and, on call we can furnish a photograph of Turner and Mitchell's letters taken from the originals.

#### A VERY SPICY LETTER FROM TURNER.

[Personal—Confidential.]

NATIONAL BOARD OF HEALTH, }  
Washington, July 12, 1880. }

*My Dear Dr. Bemiss.*—I have to thank you and Dr. Chaille for the generous effort you made for me. I could expect nothing else than that sort of filth from a blackguard, but that is lowering myself to give high praise. You know me better than to suppose that I offer any suggestions to any person concerning the outlook regarding yellow fever. I know exactly what that outlook is and you recognize the fact that I can and do keep my own counsel. There is only one notice to be taken of the matter—silence. I am sorry that the effort to protect me carried you into such a filthy mess.

Can you give me the date of the shipment of the "Pape Clement." It's not here yet, from all that I can learn. Get a duplicate of the bill of lading and send it on so that it can be hunted up.

I hope you will carry Dr. Smith over to Ship Island and let him pick up all the items. Take him by railroad to Biloxi, showing him the towns and their sanitarians.

I've had no end of anxiety concerning the Benner and the launches. Mitchell will work the river inspections all O. K. Dr. Smith, Mitchell and yourself will have to consider railroad inspections, and how far they should go—if go at all—when yellow fever is absent from a city.

I am very tired, very nervous, two weeks river cruising under the circumstances nearly used me up.

It's hot here. How your State Board must pay for just one case of yellow fever—only a little one.

Now, if this gets into the papers, what a row there would be. D—d if I don't suspect every one, or shall if I remain here long enough. Commend me to your family. Make my warmest recognition to Dr. Chaillé. I'll remember that kindly act. Vale. Yours, very sincerely,

T. J. TURNER.

#### THE EXTRAORDINARY POSTSCRIPT.

I wish I had your ears for about an hour. Can't you get the Excelsior out

to Ship Island! I just hint that to you; no one else knows that I make this If you can do so you do a big thing for yourself. But you know the situation and outlook. Sincerely,

T.

Dr. Bemiss.

## MITCHELL TO BEMISS.

MEMPHIS, Tenn., Sept. 20, 1880.

*Dear Dr. Bemiss*—Have Sternberg fortify his reports at all points—first appearance opposite the Quarantine Station—prevailing in no neighborhoods that it did not in '78—Hayes & Hebert statement that it is the same disease tht they had in '78, but denied that it was Y. f then, and Dr. Wilkinson's positive assertion that it is the same he saw in '78 and that was Y. f. and this is the same.

He need not fear to go before a jury of experts with evidence he can command.

Don't forget that you and I will have to take position very soon on this question, and I think the sooner the better. Get your N. O. cases together—no rice fields there.

Send Collins down the river if necessary to obtain more correct information. Yours,

MITCHELL.

## HOW THE PLOT WORKED AT WASHINGTON.

NATIONAL BOARD OF HEALTH,  
Washington, October 1, 1880. }

*My Dear Dr. Bemiss*—Your letter of September 28th is just received, and in the same mail I have a letter from Dr. Mitchell on the same subject.

I also have a letter from Dr. Sternberg, reiterating the opinion that the disease was actually yellow fever, and stating that Dr. Devron has reported to him that a child that came from Point Michel, in the vicinity of the family where four children died out of six, has recently died on the outskirts of the city with black vomit and suppression of urine, and Dr. Jones would not permit the body to be brought to the city for burial, although he pronounced the case one of malarial fever.

I find from Dr. Mitchell's note that he thinks Dr. Sternberg's diagnosis was probably correct. I must confess that under the circumstances I am a little puzzled as to what to advise. I should certainly accept, without hesitation, any course upon which you and Dr. Mitchell may see fit to agree, but you are the only two members of the board who have any special knowledge as regards yellow fever, and when you disagree, the matter becomes somewhat embarrassing. If there is a reasonable probability that the disease concerning which Dr. Sternberg reported was really a mild form of yellow fever, intermingled with some cases of remittent fever, and if you and Dr. Mitchell agree to make such a statement as that, I think I can say that the National Board of Health will support you with all its power, will publish in full your reports, and that the inferior States of the Mississippi Valley will arrange themselves upon your side of the question.

There are several ways of getting at this matter. In the first place, it seems that the President of the Board, in his report for the quarter ending September 30, ought to furnish such information as it would be desirable for the President of the United States and the Secretary of the Treasury to have before them in the preparation of their annual reports to Congress.

It will be perfectly proper then to state the difficulties which the board has met in relation to the Louisiana Board of Health, to comment severely upon their Mississippi river system of quarantine, and upon the results which it has produced.

If, however, you are not prepared to agree with Dr. Mitchell and to say

that this was yellow fever—and I know very well what the saying of this will involve on your part—then it becomes doubtful as to the expediency of making such a report. It then seems to me that the most dignified course which you could take will be to ignore the matter altogether, so far as you personally are concerned. As regards the National Board, it can, of course, take no notice of the action of the Louisiana Board until it is brought formally to its attention.

We have received no copy as yet of the resolutions which they have passed. If, however, they should send us a copy of such resolutions, I am doubtful about the expediency of our taking any action upon them. There is but one body that I know of which could properly and without loss of dignity take up this set of resolutions of the Louisiana State Board of Health and the cause of action which they have pursued during this last spring and summer with regard to quarantine measures. This body is the Sanitary Council of the Mississippi Valley, whose constitution provides for the taking up of precisely such questions as these. It will be a question whether the Couecil will not consider that the calling of the convention by the Louisiana State Board of Health, without having consulted it, is a piece of impertinence, and will take up the matter and will act on it in its own way, at its own time, and give the Louisiana State Board Convention the entire go-by as an organization, and also its members. You must remember that the State of Alabama is not represented in the Sanitary Council of the Mississippi Valley, having declined to join it.

If this view be correct, it will perhaps be best that the National Board shall keep serenely on its way, and leave the Sanitary Council of the Mississippi Valley to attend to the case of the Louisiana State Board of Health, which, I think, it is fully competent to do. It can use the press quite as well as Jones, and probably have quite as extended a circulation and secure a great deal more belief.

The American Public Health Association will keep clear of all questions of this kind, I think. It is a body for the promotion of sanitary science, and will not engage in any local quarrels. The matter will not be brought up in the Association, unless it is done by the Louisiana State Board of Health itself, and if that body undertakes to introduce it, I rather think it will be very promptly suppressed. The Public Health Association has its own work to do, which is entirely distinct from that of local boards, or even of such an organization as the Sanitary Council of the Mississippi Valley, and it will not take up or deal with any local quarrels whatever.

I shall write a letter to this general effect to Dr. Mitchell. I sincerely hope that you and Dr. Mitchell will be able to agree as to the course to be pursued, and I can only repeat what I have said above, that if you and he agree and are willing to state over your own signatures that the diagnosis of Dr. Sternberg was probably correct, you shall receive all the backing which we are able to give you.

Very respectfully and truly, yours,

J. S. BILLINGS.

---

Dr. S. M. Bemiss.

#### HONEST CABELL DOES NOT LIKE THE ODOR.

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA, }  
October 1, 1880. }

*Dear Dr. Bemiss :—The foregoing communication has been sent to me that I might add such comments as I may deem proper.*

My first impulse on reading it was to return it to Washington, to be laid before the Executive Committee, there being no evidence on the face of the letter that the matter had been brought to the attention of the committee, while several contingent pledges are given on behalf of the Board. On a second perusal of your letter, which Dr. Billings had also forwarded to me,

and of this reply, I came to the conclusion that yours was not intended as an official communication, but that in a case in which charges had been made against you personally (though in your capacity as a representative of the Board) you had consulted another member of the Board, in whose judgment you justly confided as to what steps you should take in vindication of yourself. In this aspect of the case I withhold the protest I should otherwise have made against the practice of directing official communications to a single member of the Board, who often answers such communications without consulting the Executive Committee.

Like Dr. Billings, I believe that if you and Dr. Mitchell should concur in the statement that you believe Dr. Sternberg's diagnosis was correct, the National Board would not fail to sustain you; but neither he nor I can give a pledge on behalf of the Board or of the executive. It must be distinctly understood then, that this is merely our opinion, and that no guarantee can be given of the official action of the Executive Committee until the committee has been consulted. I confess that until seeing in Dr. Sternberg's "confidential" letter to Dr. Billings, of September 26, the statement made on the authority of Dr. Devron, that a child from Point Mitchel had died on the outskirts of the city with black vomit and suppression of urine, I had been disposed to adopt the conclusions of the report of the commission. But I concur with Dr. Billings in thinking that the Board ought to and will sustain any view in which you and Dr. Mitchell concur.

I also agree with Dr. Billings in what he says about the Sanitary Association of the Mississippi Valley. Indeed, I made a similar suggestion to Dr. Mitchell more than a month ago, with reference to the rather impertinent invitation given by the Louisiana State Board for a Quarantine Convention. I have never had a reply from him.

I take occasion to remind you that some weeks ago I made a request that you would furnish, if accessible, the record proof of certain allegations respecting the official acts of the quarantine officer at the Mississippi Station. If it be practicable to obtain this record it will be of great importance to the Board to have possession of it as early as possible.

Truly and cordially, yours,

J. L. CABELL.

### THE BOARD OF HEALTH.

#### REGULAR WEEKLY MEETING—THE HEALTH OF THE CITY EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD—THE BOARD RESENT THE IMPERTINENT INTER-MEDDLING OF THE OFFICERS OF THE NATIONAL BOARD OF HEALTH.

The regular weekly meeting of the State Board of Health was held last evening, Dr. Joseph Jones, President, in the chair, and Drs. Formento, Faget, Von Gohren and Kells, and Messrs. Marks, Booth and Bosworth, present.

Dr. Jones called the attention of the Board to the remarkably healthy condition of the city for this season of the year, and to the almost total absence of contagious or infectious diseases. During the week ending on Saturday last, there were only 102 deaths in New Orleans from all causes, and during the last five days, ending Thursday evening, but forty-six deaths had occurred, two of which were from scarlatina, one from small-pox, and one from malarial fever. The steady high temperature, which we have had of late, was conducive to health.

Dr. Jones stated, that he had held under personal inspection the house No. 98 Old Levee street, where Henry Forbes was first taken sick, and although there were fifteen persons in this and the adjoining house, six of whom were

small children, not a single case of sickness had occurred among them to date, and all were in a perfectly healthy condition.

In regard to small-pox, Dr. Jones said the Board and its officers had done everything in their power to prevent the spread of that disease, and regretted that vaccination was not made compulsory by law.

Reference was made to the quarantine and health laws passed at the recent session of the Legislature. The former was in substance the same law as that passed in 1855, with but slight changes in the wording.

The act requiring that all inhabitant rooms should be provided with a water capacity of 200 gallons, Dr. Jones said was in the right direction, but this supply was insufficient.

A special report from Dr. Beret, sanitary inspector of the Fifth District, was read relative to the health of Algiers in connection with the overflow in the rear from the Live Oak crevasse, showing that as yet no serious effects had resulted therefrom.

A communication from Dr. Finney, resident physician at the Mississippi Quarantine Station was read, showing that all the vessels there were in a clean and healthy condition.

Mr. Marks introduced the following resolution :

*Whereas*, The Memphis Board of Health has adopted a resolution to the effect that on and after the 15th inst., and until the 1st of October, 1882, coffee, rice, sugar, molasses, spices and all tropical fruits, etc., shall be prohibited from entering Memphis, coming from Southern ports, and this extraordinary and uncalled for action (as far as New Orleans is interested), has been superinduced by the action of the National Board, in suspending its inspection service; and *whereas*, the city of New Orleans is entirely free from epidemic diseases of every kind, and in a state of health comparing favorably with any of the large cities of the Union; and, *whereas*, the efforts of intimidation that are being made to terrify Congress into making appropriations for the support of the National Board, by declaring non-intercourse with this city, or through the appeal of the Secretary of the National Board to the trusty shotgun, should not assume the dangerous form of the unnecessary destruction of commerce, be it therefore

*Resolved*, That the State Board of Health of Louisiana views with regret and astonishment, the action of the Board of Health of Memphis, and respectfully requests that so far as this city is concerned this action be reconsidered.

Mr. Marks said that if this action by the Memphis Board was to protect the people of that city from the introduction of any contagious or infectious disease, why was it that such articles of commerce as were excluded from New Orleans, after being subjected to thorough disinfection and a detention of ten days at the quarantine station, were received from New York with only one day's detention at the quarantine station there?

The resolution was unanimously adopted and the Secretary instructed to forward a copy to the Memphis Board of Health.

Mr. Booth introduced the following resolution :

*Whereas*, an effort is being made to have it appear, that the health of the people of New Orleans, of Louisiana, and of the Mississippi Valley, is being jeopardized by the Congress of the United States in refusing to continue the appropriation for the salaries of the official staff of the National Board of Health; and *whereas*, Dr. T. J. Turner, Secretary of said National Board of Health, has caused to be circulated (it is to be supposed), by order of said Board, a scandalous telegram as below to say:

MEMPHIS, July 9.—Dr. R. W. Mitchell, resident member of the National Board of Health, this morning received the following telegram from Dr. F. J. Turner, Secretary of the National Board of Health at Washington:

"Give notice to all concerned to be prepared to close inspections on the 15th inst., and get all Government property ready to place out of commission. Notify the valley. This action is owing to Congress failing to make an appropriation, and in the event of an outbreak of fever along the coast remands the residents of the Mississippi Valley to such protection as can be given by the State and local boards of health and the trusty shotgun."

This alleged notification, as aforesaid, intended as a libel upon this and other State Boards of Health, and by thus defaming them, to bulldoze the Congress of the United States into granting said National Board of Health their accustomed moneys and salaries; and

*Whereas*, said National Board of Health, by the emission of such innuendos and incendiary publications, violates the conventionalities of official intercourse in a gross and unwarrantable manner, showing what it would do if it once had power, and reflecting most aristocratically upon the self-governing ability of the American people; therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the telegram of Secretary Turner be copied and forwarded to President Cabell, of the National Board of Health, with a request that in future—if the Board has any future—their communications to the people of the valley, be couched in more decorous language when alluding to this Board.

*Resolved*, That this State Board, supported by the confidence of the people, will continue its efforts, with aid from State, city and volunteers, to ward off the importation of foreign pestilence, and trusts that, with the help of a benevolent Providence guiding the skill and courage of man, the health of the valley may be preserved without recourse to the “ trusty shotgun,” recommended by the National Board of Health.

The resolution was adopted, when the Board adjourned.

---

Your Committee, Mr. President, have thus conclusively demonstrated the :—

Supervision and detection and espionage against the State Board of Health, setting up the pretentious claims that the National Board of Health was alone to be believed.

S. M. Bemiss, resident member of the National Board of Health, had been a member of the State Board under Warmoth; S. E. Chaillé had been a member under Gov. Nicholls; ran for the presidency, and being defeated, resigned.

J. Farrar Patton, employed at the Mississippi Station, was assistant quarantine physician under Carrington, when the yellow fever was imported from the Mississippi Station in 1878.

I. N. MARKS,  
EDW. BOOTH,  
A. W. BOSWORTH,  
*Finance Committee.*

A. W. BOSWORTH,  
J. C. FAGET, D. M. P.  
I. N. MARKS,  
EDW. BOOTH,  
GEO. K. PRATT, M. D.,  
*Conference Committee.*





326



3 0112 105540030